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REMARKS BY ACTING DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
ROBERT M. GATES
1987 WILLIAM OLIVER BAKER AWARD
SECURITY AFFAIRS SUPPORT ASSOCIATION (SASA)
FT. MYER, VA.

20 MAY 1987

IT IS AN HONOR TO BE INTRODUCED BY THE MAN FOR WHOM THE MEDAL WE ARE ABOUT TO PRESENT WAS NAMED AND, INDEED, WAS ITS FIRST WINNER. IT IS NOT ALWAYS THE CASE THAT AN INTRODUCER GETS THE NAME RIGHT. WHEN FIELD MARSHAL MONTGOMERY VISITED HOLLYWOOD IN 1946, SAM GOLDWYN GAVE AN ELABORATE DINNER. HE WELCOMED HIS GUEST, SAYING THAT IT WAS A GREAT PLEASURE TO HOST A VERY DISTINGUISHED SOLDIER, "MARSHALL FIELD MONTGOMERY". AT THAT POINT, ANOTHER GUEST, JACK WARNER, CORRECTED GOLDWYN, CALLING OUT "IT'S MONTGOMERY WARD, YOU FOOL."

WHEN I NOTE THE OTHER RECIPIENTS OF THE WILLIAM O. BAKER AWARD -- SENATOR BARRY GOLDWATER AND AMBASSADOR VERNON WALTERS, BOTH MEN WHO HAVE MADE ENORMOUS AND SINGULAR COUNTRIBUTIONS TO THIS NATION'S INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITY -- I AM INDEED HONORED EVEN TO BE A PART OF THE PROCEEDINGS.

I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME AND CONGRATULATE THE NEW DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE, JUDGE WEBSTER. I AM A BIT INTIMIDATED BY THE NUMBER AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF PEOPLE HERE THIS EVENING. I SPEAK TONIGHT KNOWING OTHERS HERE COULD DO BETTER. I AM REMINDED THAT AT THE INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY, FORMER VICE PRESIDENT NIXON WENT UP TO TED SORENSEN TO SAY THAT THERE

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HAD BEEN THINGS IN KENNEDY'S SPEECH THAT HE, NIXON, WOULD LIKE TO HAVE SAID. SORENSEN RESPONDED, "YOU MEAN, 'ASK NOT WHAT YOUR COUNTRY CAN DO FOR YOU, BUT WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR COUNTRY?'" AND NIXON REPLIED, "NO, THE PART BEGINNING, 'I DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR....'"

IT IS A PLEASURE TO HAVE MEMBERS OF THE STAFFS OF THE INTELLIGENCE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES WITH US TONIGHT. YOU KNOW PRESIDENT REAGAN IS FAR FROM THE FIRST PRESIDENT TO HAVE DIFFICULTIES WITH CONGRESS. PRESIDENT GROVER CLEVELAND, FOR EXAMPLE, HAD NOTORIOUSLY POOR RELATIONS WITH THE SENATE. ACCORDING TO A STORY OF THE TIME, ONE NIGHT HE WAS NUDGED BY HIS WIFE, WHO SAID "WAKE UP. I THINK THERE ARE BURGLARS IN THE HOUSE." "NO, MY DEAR," SAID THE SLEEPY PRESIDENT, "IN THE SENATE MAYBE, BUT NOT IN THE HOUSE."

THERE IS A RISK AT AN AWARDS DINNER FOR THE PROSE TO BECOME A BIT PURPLE AND FOR THE PRAISE TO BE EXCESSIVE. AT A MEETING OF A PARIS LITERARY SOCIETY, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN FOUND HIMSELF SHOWERED WITH FLOWERY COMPLIMENTS IN FRENCH, A LANGUAGE THAT HE DID NOT SPEAK. HE DECIDED IT WOULD BE SAFEST TO APPLAUD ONLY WHEN HE SAW A LADY OF HIS ACQUAINTANCE APPLAUDING. AFTER THE GATHERING WAS OVER, FRANKLIN'S LITTLE GRANDSON SAID, "BUT GRANDPAPA, YOU ALWAYS APPLAUDED, AND LOUDER THAN ANYONE ELSE, WHEN THEY PRAISED YOU." DICK, WE WILL NOT PUT YOU IN THAT POSITION THIS EVENING.

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TONIGHT WE ARE GATHERED TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR ONE OF OUR OWN -- A LIFELONG PRACTITIONER OF THE CRAFT OF INTELLIGENCE, RICHARD HELMS. AMBASSADOR HELMS' BIOGRAPHY IS IN YOUR PROGRAM SO I WILL NOT REPEAT IT. LET ME NOTE ONLY THAT HE WAS APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE IN JUNE 1966 AND HE WAS REAPPOINTED TO THE POST BY PRESIDENT NIXON IN 1969. NO DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE SINCE DICK HELMS HAS KEPT THAT POSITION THROUGH BOTH A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND A CHANGE OF PARTIES IN THE WHITE HOUSE. HE CONTINUES TO SERVE HIS COUNTRY TO THIS DAY THROUGH MEMBERSHIP OF A NUMBER OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES, AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY, BY BEING A TRUSTED FRIEND AND SAGACIOUS ADVISOR OF MANY IN THIS ROOM.

AS DCI, DICK HELMS WAS THE VERY MODEL OF A PROFESSIONAL LEADER. WISE, EXPERIENCED, DISCIPLINED, AND DISCREET, HE TOOK US THROUGH SOME EXTRAORDINARILY DIFFICULT TIMES. DURING THE VIETNAM WAR, FOR EXAMPLE, HE HAD TO MANAGE AN ENORMOUS OPERATIONAL PROGRAM IN THE FIELD AND DEAL WITH EQUALLY INTRACTABLE PROBLEMS HERE IN WASHINGTON -- GAINING ACCESS TO AN EMBATTLED WHITE HOUSE, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME PRESERVING THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY'S ANALYTICAL INTREGITY. MOST WHO LABORED IN THE LOWER LEVELS OF CIA AND THE COMMUNITY DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE POLITICAL PRESSURES AND CROSS CURRENTS AT WORK AT THE TIME. NOW, OF COURSE, WE DO UNDERSTAND, AND HIS EXAMPLE HAS BEEN A GUIDING LIGHT.

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WHILE HENRY KISSINGER IS FAMOUS FOR MANY THINGS, PUBLIC PRAISE OF SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IS NOT ONE OF THEM. AND, YET, IN HIS MEMOIRS KISSINGER OFFERS AN EXTRAORDINARY DESCRIPTION OF THE MAN WE HONOR THIS EVENING: "DISCIPLINED, METICULOUSLY FAIR AND DISCREET, HELMS PERFORMED HIS DUTIES WITH THE TOTAL OBJECTIVITY ESSENTIAL TO AN EFFECTIVE INTELLIGENCE SERVICE .... I RESPECTED HELMS NOT BECAUSE HE WAS CONGENIAL, THOUGH HE WAS CERTAINLY THAT, BUT BECAUSE OF HIS PROFESSIONAL INSIGHT AND UNFLAPPABILITY. HE NEVER VOLUNTEERED POLICY ADVICE BEYOND THE QUESTIONS THAT WERE ASKED HIM, THOUGH NEVER HESITATING TO WARN THE WHITE HOUSE OF DANGERS EVEN WHEN HIS VIEWS RAN COUNTER TO THE PRECONCEPTIONS OF THE PRESIDENT OR OF HIS SECURITY ADVISOR. HE STOOD HIS GROUND WHERE LESSER MEN MIGHT HAVE RESORTED TO AMBIGUITY.... NO ONE IS PROMOTED THROUGH THE RANKS TO DIRECTOR OF CIA WHO IS NOT TEMPERED IN MANY BATTLES; HELMS WAS STRONG AND HE WAS WARY. HIS URBANITY WAS COUPLED WITH EXTRAORDINARY TENACITY; HIS SMILE DID NOT ALWAYS INCLUDE HIS EYES.... AT THE SAME TIME I NEVER KNEW HIM TO MISUSE HIS KNOWLEDGE OR HIS POWER. HE NEVER FORGOT THAT HIS INTEGRITY GUARANTEED HIS EFFECTIVENESS, THAT HIS BEST WEAPON WITH PRESIDENTS WAS A REPUTATION FOR RELIABILITY."

WHILE DIRECTOR HELMS WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK FOR HIMSELF SHORTLY, I THINK IT IS APPROPRIATE AT A TIME WHEN THE GOVERNMENT AGAIN IS IN SOME TURMOIL, TO LET A YOUNGER HELMS SPEAK TO US. I THINK YOU WILL FIND IN HIS WORDS OF MANY YEARS

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AGO A WISDOM AND A PERSPECTIVE TOO OFTEN LOST TODAY. IN 1960, SPEAKING TO THE SOCIETY OF ALUMNI OF WILLIAMS COLLEGE, DICK SAID, "THE LAST TIME I STOOD ON A PLATFORM AT WILLIAMS, I MANAGED TO FORGET MY MEMORIZED SPEECH RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE. THAT WAS AT COMMENCEMENT IN 1935, AND NEVER HAD I HAD THE FULL ATTENTION OF AN AUDIENCE AS I DID DURING THOSE PAINFUL SECONDS OF BLACKOUT.... THE ENSUING 25 YEARS (FROM 1935 TO 1960) SHOULD GIVE US CONFIDENCE IN THE FLEXIBILITY, RESILIENCE, AND STAMINA OF OUR WAY OF LIFE. WE DID DEFEAT THE DEPRESSION, WE DID WIN A MAJOR WORLD WAR, AND IN THE PROCESS WE MADE MANY CHANGES IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PATTERN OF THE UNITED STATES. HENCE, IT SEEMS HARDLY FITTING THAT IN OUR LAND TODAY THERE SHOULD BE SO MANY CRIES OF APPREHENSION, IF NOT DOWNRIGHT FEAR. WHAT DO WE DREAD?"

AFTER DESCRIBING THE WORLD OF 1960, HE WENT ON TO SAY, "WHAT IS RELEVANT IS THAT WE SHOULD FACE THE REALITIES WITH INTELLIGENCE AND PERSPECTIVE. WE ARE ALL TOO PRONE TO ALTERNATE BETWEEN A CRISIS PSYCHOLOGY AND THE COMFORTABLE PLACIDITY OF, 'LET GEORGE DO IT.' THIS LATTER APPROACH IS FINE FOR LOCAL LAUNDRY AND DRY CLEANING, BUT IT IS CERTAIN DISASTER AS AN APPROACH TO LIFE IN THIS SMALL WORLD OF OURS."

DICK HELMS IN 1960 SPOKE OF THE NEED TO DEVELOP OUR OWN OPINIONS BASED ON EVIDENCE, AND OF THE NEED TO EVALUATE SOURCES. HE SAID, "I SUBMIT, MOST OF THE ISSUES WHICH CONFRONT US REQUIRE EXAMINATION, CAREFUL THOUGHT, AND, ABOVE ALL,

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EVALUATION OF THE RELEVANT EVIDENCE." THIS IS AS VALID A PROPOSITION IN 1987 AS IN 1960.

AT ANOTHER TIME, IN 1971, WHEN INTELLIGENCE WAS EMBROILED IN CONTROVERSY AND OUR ROLE QUESTIONED, DICK SPOKE OUT AGAIN. HE TOLD THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEWSPAPER EDITORS THAT THE ASSERTION CIA WAS "A LAW UNTO ITSELF, ENGAGED IN PROVOCATIVE COVERT ACTIVITIES REPUGNANT TO A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY AND SUBJECT TO NO CONTROLS...IS AN OUTGROWTH, I SUPPOSE, OF AN INHERENT AMERICAN DISTASTE FOR THE PEACETIME GATHERING OF INTELLIGENCE." HE CONTINUED, "OUR MISSION, IN THE EYES OF MANY THOUGHTFUL AMERICANS, MAY APPEAR TO BE IN CONFLICT WITH SOME OF THE TRADITIONS AND IDEALS OF OUR FREE SOCIETY. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR ME TO AGREE WITH THIS VIEW, BUT I RESPECT IT. IT IS QUITE ANOTHER MATTER WHEN SOME OF OUR CRITICS -- TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE TRADITIONAL SILENCE OF THOSE ENGAGED IN INTELLIGENCE -- SAY THINGS THAT ARE EITHER VICIOUS, OR JUST PLAIN SILLY."

HE CONTINUED, ADDRESSING A PROBLEM THAT PREOCCUPIES US STILL: "AND SO I COME TO THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION OF RECONCILING THE SECURITY NEEDS OF AN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE WITH THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF OUR DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. AT THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM IS SECRECY, BECAUSE IT IS AXIOMATIC THAT AN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE MUST WRAP ITSELF IN AS MUCH SECRECY AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO OPERATE EFFECTIVELY...." DICK WENT ON TO SAY THAT, "HERE IN THE UNITED STATES THE AREA OF INTELLIGENCE OVER WHICH WE CAN MAINTAIN THE TRADITIONAL SECRECY HAS BEEN

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STEADILY REDUCED...WE HAVE MADE IT OUR PRACTICE NOT TO ANSWER CRITICISM. FORMER SENATOR SALTONSTALL SUMMED IT UP PRETTY WELL WHEN HE SAID IN AN OPEN SOCIETY LIKE OURS, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO INFORM THE PUBLIC WITHOUT INFORMING OUR ENEMIES....I CANNOT, THEN, GIVE YOU AN EASY ANSWER TO THE OBJECTIONS RAISED BY THOSE WHO CONSIDER INTELLIGENCE WORK INCOMPATIBLE WITH DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. THE NATION MUST TO A DEGREE TAKE IT ON FAITH THAT WE TOO ARE HONORABLE MEN DEVOTED TO HER SERVICE."

AND THE THEN DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE CONCLUDED BY SAYING: "THE SAME OBJECTIVITY WHICH MAKES US USEFUL TO OUR GOVERNMENT AND OUR COUNTRY LEAVES US UNCOMFORTABLY AWARE OF OUR AMBIGUOUS PLACE IN IT. WE MAY CHAFE UNDER THE CRITICISM WE DO NOT ANSWER, BUT WE UNDERSTAND AS WELL AS ANYONE THE DIFFICULTIES AND THE CONTRADICTIONS OF CONDUCTING FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS ON BEHALF OF A FREE SOCIETY....WE ARE, AFTER ALL, A PART OF THIS DEMOCRACY, AND WE BELIEVE IN IT. WE WOULD NOT WANT TO SEE OUR WORK DISTORT ITS VALUES AND ITS PRINCIPLES. WE PROPOSE TO ADAPT INTELLIGENCE TO AMERICAN SOCIETY, NOT VICE VERSA.... WE BELIEVE, AND I SAY THIS SOLEMNLY, THAT OUR WORK IS NECESSARY TO PERMIT THIS COUNTRY TO GROW ON IN A FEARSOME WORLD, AND TO FIND ITS WAY INTO A BETTER AND MORE PEACEFUL ONE."

I COULD, OF COURSE, CONTINUE WITH THE WISDOM AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF DICK HELMS AND THE FOLKLORE SURROUNDING HIM. BUT PERHAPS IT'S ENOUGH JUST TO SAY THAT, ON RARE OCCASIONS,

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GREAT ENTERPRISES ARE FORTUNATE TO BE LED BY INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE EXTRAORDINARY IMPACT AND LEAVE AN ENDURING LEGACY, INDIVIDUALS WHO SHAPE THE VERY ETHOS OF AN ORGANIZATION. FEW SUCH MEN AND WOMEN COME ALONG. YOU, DICK, THROUGH YOUR EXTRAORDINARY THREE DECADES OF SERVICE TO THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AND TO THE AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY, ARE ONE OF THOSE FEW.

OUR MACHINES -- OUR COMPUTERS AND OUR SATELLITES -- ARE THE WONDERS OF THE AGE. MANY OF YOU HERE TONIGHT HELPED DESIGN THEM. BUT INTELLIGENCE, OUR CRAFT, IS STILL PREEMINENTLY AN MATTER OF PEOPLE. IT IS, AND ALWAYS HAS BEEN, THE CALIBER OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE -- THEIR CREATIVITY, DETERMINATION, BRILLIANCE AND COURAGE -- THAT HAS SPELT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUCCESS AND FAILURE. THE FAILURES OF INTELLIGENCE -- A FEW REAL, MOST FICTIONAL -- FILL OUR DAILY NEWSPAPERS. BUT TODAY WE CELEBRATE ONE OF OUR SUCCESSES -- ONE OF OUR HEROES -- IN THE ONLY WAY WE CAN: PRIVATELY TOGETHER. AND, YET, WE ALL KNOW INSTINCTIVELY THAT THE ENDURING FREEDOM AND WELL-BEING OF OUR COUNTRY IS WITNESS ENOUGH TO OUR SECRET VICTORIES AND SATISFACTION ENOUGH TO THOSE, LIKE DICK HELMS, WHO WERE AND ARE THE ARCHITECTS OF SO MANY OF THOSE VICTORIES.

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